

Resources for Navigating the Justice System

For clinicians

1. ***An Integrative Approach to Clinical Social Work Practice with Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Clinician's Guide* — Anna Morgan-Mullane**
This is probably one of the best clinical resources for children whose parents are incarcerated. It addresses ambiguous loss, trauma, family disruption, mass incarceration, anti-Blackness, and anti-oppressive practice. It also discusses TF-CBT, narrative, relational, and attachment-based approaches. [Springer](#)
2. ***Best Clinical Practices for Treating Families in Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems* — Corinne C. Datchi**
Excellent for clinicians working directly with **justice-involved youth and families**. It covers family systems, assessment, case conceptualization, forensic mental health, and evidence-based interventions. [American Psychological Association](#)
3. ***Racial Trauma in Black Clients: Effective Practice for Clinicians* — Jennifer R. Jones-Damis & Kelly N. Moore**
Particularly relevant when a child's justice-system involvement includes experiences of racial profiling, discrimination, police encounters, school discipline, or other racialized stress. It includes a specific chapter on **working with law enforcement** and another on helping parents and children with racial trauma. [Guilford Press](#)
4. ***Considering Racial Trauma and Racial Socialization in TF-CBT for Black Youth* — Isha W. Metzger**
A newer resource specifically focused on adapting trauma-focused CBT for Black children and adolescents. It is especially useful for clinicians who want to integrate **racial trauma and racial socialization into assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment**. [Google Books](#)
5. ***Black Students Matter: Play Therapy Techniques to Support Black Students Experiencing Racial Trauma***
This one could be particularly useful for your work because it connects **racial trauma, school discipline, the school-to-prison pipeline, juvenile justice involvement, and play therapy**. It includes interventions for Black children from kindergarten through high school and approaches for engaging families. [OUP Academic](#)

For clinicians working across child welfare + justice systems

6. ***Children of Color in the Child Welfare System: Psychological Research and Best Practices* — edited by Yvette R. Harris & Gloria Oliver Carpenter**
Although broader than juvenile justice, this would be valuable for clinicians because child welfare and juvenile justice involvement often overlap. The book specifically addresses disparities affecting children of color and provides recommendations for culturally responsive mental health services. [American Psychological Association](#)

7. ***African American Children and Families in Child Welfare***

This is particularly useful for understanding how race, family systems, child welfare, education, behavioral health, and **juvenile justice involvement** intersect for African American children and families. [Columbia University Press](#)

For children and families

The **Office for Victims of Crime** has excellent, free child-friendly resources explaining the criminal court process:

- **Ages 2–6: *Brave Oscar***
- **Ages 7–12: *I Am Malik***
- **Ages 13–18: *There's More to Me***

These explain court processes, roles, and children's emotional responses in developmentally appropriate ways. They are available in multiple languages. [Office for Victims of Crime](#)

For children with an **incarcerated parent**, the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated maintains a substantial reading list. Some particularly useful titles include:

- ***Ruby on the Outside*** — age 11+
- ***Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me***
- ***Far Apart, Close in Heart: Being a Family When a Loved One Is Incarcerated***
- ***Surviving the Chaos: Dontae's Story*** [NRCCFI](#)

Four intersecting experiences to frame the work:

1. "What is happening to me?"

Understanding courts, police, detention, probation, etc.

2. "What is happening to my family?"

Incarceration, separation, ambiguous loss, family stress.

3. "What is happening because I am Black?"

Racial profiling, racial trauma, school discipline, criminalization, and racial socialization.

4. "Who am I beyond this system?"

Identity, strengths, belonging, culture, hope, agency, and future orientation. [Sage Journals](#)